

Chief Administrative Officer of the House: History and Organization

Updated February 2, 2011

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

RS22731

Summary

The Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives (CAO) is an elected officer of the House, chosen at the beginning of each Congress. The office of the CAO consists of three divisions: the immediate office of the CAO, operations, and customer solutions. Together, these divisions oversee human resources, financial services, technology infrastructure, procurement, facilities management, and other House support functions. An office initially created at the beginning the 104th Congress (1995-1996), the CAO assumed the duties previously performed by the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services, and manages the operations of other House administrative offices and support services.

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Introduction

The Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives (CAO) is an elected officer of the House. Elected at the beginning of each Congress with the slate of officers nominated by the majority party, the CAO's term coincides with the dates of that Congress. Initially created in the 104th Congress (1995-1996) to replace the appointed Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services, the CAO oversees human resources, financial services, technology infrastructure, procurement, facilities management, and other support functions for the House of Representatives. The CAO's portfolio complements the legislative operations of the Clerk of the House and the security functions of the Sergeant at Arms.¹

History of the Chief Administrative Officer

Consolidation of administrative functions of the House under the direction of a single individual began with the creation of the appointed position of Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services in the 102nd Congress (1991-1992). Following the change in majority party from Democratic to Republican, the House in the 104th Congress (1995-1996) abolished the position of Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services and created an elected position of Chief Administrative Officer of the House to assume his duties.

Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services

In the 102nd Congress (1991-1992), Representative Richard Gephardt introduced H.Res. 423, the House Administrative Reform Resolution of 1992.² Among other provisions, H.Res. 423 created the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services who was "charged with running the daily nonlegislative and financial operations of the House."³ In debate on the resolution, Representative Gephardt summarized the role the director could play in the operation of the House.

The Director is to be jointly appointed by the Speaker, the majority leader and the minority leader, and that individual must have extensive management and financial experience.

Under the resolution, the Director, subject to policy direction and oversight of the House Administration Committee, would ultimately receive responsibility for the finance office, inside mail and internal mail operations, House information systems, office furnishings, office supply, office systems management, typewriter, the House restaurant system, telecommunications and telephone exchange, the barber shop and beauty shop, the non-legislative functions of printing services, the recording studio, and the records and registration office, the office of photography, the guide service, and the House child care center.⁴

¹ For more information on the Clerk of the House, see CRS Report 98-761, *Clerk of the House: Legislative and Administrative Duties*, by Lorraine H. Tong. For more information on the House Sergeant at Arms, see CRS Report 98-835, *House Sergeant at Arms: Legislative and Administrative Duties*, by Lorraine H. Tong. For more information on House officers in general, see CRS Report 98-401, *House Administrative Officers and Officials*, by Lorraine H. Tong and CRS Report RL33220, *Support Offices in the House of Representatives: Roles and Authorities*, by Ida A. Brudnick.

² "Public Bills and Resolutions," *Congressional Record*, vol. 138, part 6 (April 8, 1992), p. 8525.

³ Rep. John Moakley, "Providing for Consideration of House Resolutions 423, House Administration Reform Act of 1992," remarks in the House, *Congressional Record*, vol. 138, part 7 (April 9, 1992), p. 9030.

⁴ Rep. Richard Gephardt, "Providing for Consideration of House Resolutions 423, House Administration Reform Act of 1992," remarks in the House, *Congressional Record*, vol. 138, part 7 (April 9, 1992), p. 9041.

Following debate, the House agreed to H.Res. 423 by a vote of 269 to 81. The resolution amended the Rules of the House to create Rule LII establishing the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services and defining the Director's authority over administrative and financial functions of the House.⁵ In January 1993, the rule governing the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services was incorporated into to Rule VI with the adoption of the rules for the 103rd Congress (1993-1994).⁶

The first Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services, Lt. Gen. Leonard P. Wishart, III (ret.), was jointly appointed by the Speaker, the majority leader, and the minority leader on October 23, 1992.⁷

Chief Administrative Officer

In the 104th Congress (1995-1996), as part of the rules package agreed to on January 5, 1995, the House abolished the appointed Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services position and created a new officer of the House, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).⁸ Elected by the House, the CAO provides infrastructure and support for House member and committee operations. The support provided includes managing employee payroll, benefits, child care, parking, dining services, and installing furniture in member offices.⁹ The Committee on House Administration provides "oversight of the ... Chief Administrative Officer."¹⁰

Limited discussion of the creation of the CAO position took place in the debate on the Rules of the House (H.Res. 6) for the 104th Congress (1995-1996). Representative Ben Cardin advocated for appointing, not electing, the CAO to ensure the position remained bipartisan and outside of politics.

...[W]here a partisan Chief Administrative Officer will replace a nonpartisan Chief Administrative Officer will replace a nonpartisan Director of Financial and Non-Legislative Services. Many of us on both sides of the aisle have been working for less partisanship [sic], particularly in the administration of the House of Representatives. It was the Republicans who worked with us to develop the Director of Financial and Non-Legislative Services, being approved by both the majority and minority, reporting to a committee composed of equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans. What happens

⁵ U.S. Congress, House, "Rule VI, clause 1," U.S. Congress, House, *Constitution, Jefferson's Manual, and Rules of the House of Representatives of the United States One Hundred Third Congress*, prepared by Wm. Holmes Brown, Parliamentarian, 102nd Cong., 2nd sess., H.Doc. 102-405 (Washington: GPO, 1993), § 654. The Committee on House Administration provides oversight for the CAO.

⁶ "Rules of the House," *Congressional Record*, vol. 139, part 1 (January 5, 1993), p. 49.

⁷ "Appointments by the Speaker After Sine Die Adjournment," *Congressional Record*, vol. 138, part 23 (October 9, 1992), p. 34802.

⁸ "Rules of the House," *Congressional Record*, vol. 141, part 1 (January 5, 1995), p. 463. Additionally, H.Res. 6 abolished the position of Doorkeeper of the House and transferred some of this officer's functions to the new CAO. The Doorkeeper was responsible for certain administrative functions, including having "custody of all the furniture, books, and public property in the committee and other rooms." (U.S. Congress, House, *Hind's Precedents of the House of Representatives of the United States, Volume I*, prepared by Asher C. Hinds, 59th Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington: GPO, 1907), § 262. Other of the Doorkeeper's functions were transferred to the Sergeant at Arms and the Clerk of the House.

⁹ U.S. Congress, House Chief Administrative Officer, "What We Do," *Chief Administrative Office of the House of Representatives*, <http://cao.house.gov/what.shtml>.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, House, "Rule II, cl. 4(a), (b), and (c), and Rule X, cl. 4(d)(1)(A)," *Constitution, Jefferson's Manual, and Rules of the House of Representatives of the United States, One Hundred Eleventh Congress*, prepared by John V. Sullivan, Parliamentarian, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., H.Doc. 110-162 (Washington: GPO, 2007) §§ 661-664 and 750-752.

under this particular bill? That office is abolished and replaced with a partisan Chief Administrative Officer. A few months ago the Republicans favored bipartisanship in administration to avoid the abuse of power by any one party. Now, just a few months later, we see a complete reversal.¹¹

Appointment Process

As an elected official of the House, the CAO is elected by House members on the first day of a new Congress. In general, the majority party introduces a resolution to elect the officers of the House, including the CAO. The slate of candidates is often chosen by the majority party leadership, sometimes with consultation with the minority. After the resolution's introduction, the minority party typically offers an amendment to nominate their own slate of candidates for office. The vote to agree to the resolution is generally a party line vote.¹²

Interim Chief Administrative Officers

In two cases, the Speaker has named an interim CAO following the resignation of the elected official. The first instance occurred in the 105th Congress (1997-1998) when Speaker Newt Gingrich, pursuant to his authority under 2 U.S.C. § 75a-1(a),¹³ appointed Jeff Trandahl "to act as and to exercise temporarily the duties of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives."¹⁴

The second instance occurred on July 15, 2010, following the resignation of CAO Daniel Beard.¹⁵ Speaker Nancy Pelosi used her authority pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 75a-1(a) to appoint Daniel J.

¹¹ Rep. Ben Cardin, "Rules of the House," remarks in the House, *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 141 (January 4, 1995), p. H83.

¹² For example, see the debate on the election of officers to the 112th Congress (2011-2012). Representative Jeb Hensarling introduced H.Res. 1 with the slate of majority candidates for the Clerk of the House, the Sergeant at Arms, the Chaplain, and the Chief Administrative Officer. Representative John Larson, after requesting that the question be divided for a separate vote on the Chaplain, offered an amendment, in the nature of a substitute, with a slate of minority candidates. The amendment was rejected and the House agreed to H.Res. 1, electing the majority candidates ("Election of Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer and Chaplain," *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 157 (January 5, 2011), p. H6. Additionally, the minority will sometimes nominate staff members as candidates for House officers. Pursuant to House Rule IV, clause 2 and clause 4, "minority employees nominated as elected officers of the House" have floor privileges during the current and all future Congresses. For more information, see U.S. Congress, House, "Rule IV, clause 2 and 4," *Constitution, Jefferson's Manual, and Rules of the House of Representatives One Hundred Eleventh Congress*, prepared by John V. Sullivan, Parliamentarian, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., H.Doc. 110-162 (Washington: GPO, 2009), §678 and § 680.

¹³ 2 U.S.C. § 75a-1(a) provides that, "In case of a vacancy, from whatever cause, in the office of Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer or Chaplain, of the House of Representatives, or in case of the incapacity or inability of the incumbent of any such office to perform the duties thereof, the Speaker of the House of Representatives may appoint a person to act as, and to exercise temporarily the duties of, Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer or Chaplain, as the case may be, until a person is chosen by the House of Representatives and duly qualifies as Clerk, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer or Chaplain, as the case may be, or until the termination of the incapacity or inability of the incumbent." The Chief Administrative Officer was added to this provision in the 104th Congress (1995-1996) [P.L. 104-186, 110 Stat. 1733, August 20, 1996].

¹⁴ Rep. Newt Gingrich, "Appointment of Temporary Chief Administrative Officer of House of Representatives," *Congressional Record*, vol. 143, part 1 (January 9, 1997), p. 279.

¹⁵ Rep. Nancy Pelosi, "Resignation of Chief Administrative Officer," *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 156 (July 15, 2010), p. H5656.

Strodel as interim CAO, effective July 18, 2010.¹⁶ The appointment for an interim CAO lasts until the House elects a replacement.¹⁷

Structure of the CAO's Office

The CAO's office supervises the non-legislative functions of the House of Representatives. CAO office divisions are organized along operational and mission lines that include the immediate office of the CAO, operations, and customer solutions.¹⁸

Immediate Office

The immediate office includes the office of the chief administrative officer and his support staff. It is responsible for oversight of the operations and customer solutions divisions and directing studies ordered by the House leadership. The immediate office also supervises the management of the three House media galleries,¹⁹ which provide facilities for press coverage of the House; assists members of Congress and staff with the distribution of press releases;²⁰ issues the CAO's semi-annual report on the office's activities and accomplishments;²¹ and issues the "Statement of Disbursements of the House."²² The immediate office also maintains a public website, <http://cao.house.gov>.

Operations

Operations is responsible for developing and maintaining facilities and systems that are used by the House of Representatives, including financial management, procurement, technology, and human resources. In addition, operations staff serve as consultants to members' offices on their internal operations and systems. Operations is divided into four groups:

- *Administration and Financial Services*, handling procurement, financial counseling, payroll and benefits, budget management, resources management, human resources, and workplace safety;
- *Workforce Services*, handling employee and organizational development, employee assistance, the House learning center, and House child care;

¹⁶ Rep. Nancy Pelosi, "Appointment of Temporary Chief Administrative Officer," *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 156 (July 15, 2010), p. H5656. Mr. Beard resigned effective July 18, 2010.

¹⁷ 2 U.S.C. § 75a-1(a).

¹⁸ Telephone conversation between the author and the office of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House, September 10, 2007.

¹⁹ The media galleries consist of the daily press gallery, the periodical press gallery, and the radio and television correspondents gallery.

²⁰ "Media Resources—United States House of Representatives, 112th Congress-1st Session," <http://www.house.gov/house/mediagallery.shtml>.

²¹ U.S. Congress, House, "Rule II, cl. 4(b)," *Constitution, Jefferson's Manual, and Rules of the House of Representatives of the United States, One Hundred Eleventh Congress*, prepared by John V. Sullivan, Parliamentarian, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., H.Doc. 110-162 (Washington: GPO, 2007) § 662.

²² For example, see U.S. Congress, House, Statement of Disbursements of the House as compiled by the Chief Administrative Officer from October 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008, 111th Cong., 1st sess., H.Doc. 111-10 (Washington: GPO, 2009) and U.S. Congress, House, "Statements of Disbursements," <http://disbursements.house.gov>.

- *House Information Resources*, handling technology support, technology infrastructure, business solutions, web solutions, facilities management, informational security, and systems engineering; and
- *Immediate Operations Office*, handling business continuity and disaster recovery, business improvement, portfolio management, and committee hearing rooms renovation.²³

In addition, operations manages projects that affect all House employees. These include improving payroll and benefit services, introducing new financial and purchasing systems, upgrading “HouseNet,”²⁴ and updating the House messaging system.

Customer Solutions

Customer Solutions is responsible for facilitating the daily work of congressional staff members through the CAO Customer Solutions Center (CCSC), which includes the CAO call center, FirstCall+.²⁵ Customer Solutions is divided into three groups:

- *Customer Solutions Delivery*, handling the CCSC, the House recording studio, the office supply store, the House gift shop, and photography;
- *Assets, Furnishings and Logistics*, handling acquisition, payments, equipment maintenance, equipment inventory management, warehousing, carpet, drapes, upholstery, cabinetry, finishing, and modular furniture;²⁶ and
- *Immediate Customer Solutions Office*, handling the disbursement of House resources and supplies and the management of customer relationships.²⁷

Customer Solutions is also responsible for office renovations and moving members of the House and their staff to new offices. This responsibility includes holding equipment fairs to demonstrate new technology and products, and service fairs to highlight support offices, including the Architect of the Capitol, the Library of Congress (including the Congressional Research Service), the Clerk of the House, and the Sergeant at Arms.

Green the Capitol

In March 2007, Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, and the then chair of the Committee on House Administration, the late Juanita Millender-McDonald, asked CAO Daniel Beard and his Senate counterparts to “undertake a ‘Green the Capitol’ initiative to ensure that the House institutes the most up-to-date industry and government standards for green building and

²³ U.S. Congress, House Chief Administrative Officer, “Operations,” *CAO Semi-Annual Report*, 110th Cong., 1st sess. <http://cao.house.gov/report/cao-ops.shtml>.

²⁴ HouseNet, <http://housenet.house.gov>, is the House of Representatives’ intranet site supported by the CAO and is available only to House offices.

²⁵ FirstCall+ consists of a call-in phone number (202-225-8000) and a walk-in customer service center (B-227 Longworth House Office Building). FirstCall+ is designed to answer member and committee offices’ questions on ordering, acquisition, and production.

²⁶ The CAO works with the General Services Administration’s (GSA) congressional service representatives to coordinate office space and furnishings for district offices. See U.S. General Service Administration, “Congressional Support Services,” <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100839>; and Judy Schneider and Michael L. Koempel, *Congressional Deskbook 2005-2007 109th Congress* (Alexandria, VA: TheCapitol.Net, 2005), p. 131.

²⁷ U.S. Congress, House Chief Administrative Officer, “Customer Solutions,” *CAO Semi-Annual Report*, 110th Cong., 1st sess. <http://cao.house.gov/report/cao-cs.shtml>.

green operating procedures.”²⁸ Since 2007, the “Green the Capitol” initiative has worked to reduce the carbon footprint of the House through numerous programs including my green office, installing low VOC (volatile organic compounds) carpets in House offices, purchasing renewable electricity, using green cleaning products, and working with House food service vendor Restaurant Associates to use locally sourced food and biodegradable containers and utensils in the cafeterias.²⁹

²⁸ U.S. Congress, Speaker of the House of Representatives, “House Democrats Urge Greening of Capitol Complex,” press release, March 2, 2007, <http://www.speaker.gov/newsroom/pressreleases?id=0082>.

²⁹ For more information on the “Green the Capitol” initiative, see CRS Report RL34694, *Administering Green Programs in Congress: Issues and Options*, by Jacob R. Straus.

Appendix. Directors of Non-Legislative and Financial Services and Chief Administrative Officers of the House of Representatives

Since the creation of the office of the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services in the 102nd Congress (1991-1992), seven individuals have served as either the Director or as CAO of the House on a temporary or permanent basis. **Table A-1** provides a list of Directors and CAOs, including the Congress in which they served, and the date of their appointment or election.

Table A-1. Directors of Non-Legislative and Financial Services and Chief Administrative Officers of the House of Representatives

Congress	Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services	Date Appointed ^a
102 nd (1991-1992)	Leonard P. Wishart, III	October 9, 1992 ^b
103 rd (1993-1994)	Leonard P. Wishart, III	January 5, 1993 ^c
	Randall B. Medlock	January 1994 ^d
Congress	Chief Administrative Officer	Date Elected
104 th (1995-1996)	Scott M. Faulkner	January 4, 1995 ^e
	Jeff Trandahl	November 22, 1996 ^f
105 th (1997-1998)	Jeff Trandahl	January 9, 1997 ^g
	James M. Eagen, III	July 31, 1997 ^h
106 th (1999-2000)	James M. Eagen, III	January 6, 1999 ⁱ
107 th (2001-2002)	James M. Eagen, III	January 3, 2001 ^j
108 th (2003-2004)	James M. Eagen, III	January 7, 2003 ^k
109 th (2005-2006)	James M. Eagen, III	January 4, 2005 ^l
110 th (2007-2008)	James M. Eagen, III	January 4, 2007 ^m
	Daniel P. Beard	February 6, 2007 ⁿ
111 th (2009-2010)	Daniel P. Beard	January 6, 2007 ^o
	Daniel J. Strodel	July 18, 2010 ^p
112 th (2011-2012)	Daniel J. Strodel	January 6, 2011 ^q

Source: Clerk of the House, http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/cao.html.

- a. In the 102nd Congress, H.Res. 423, "House Administrative Reform Resolution of 1992," created the Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services and established his or her joint appointment by the Speaker of the House, the majority leader, and the minority leader, pursuant to Rule LII, cl. 1.
- b. "Appointments by the Speaker After Sine Die Adjournment," *Congressional Record*, vol. 138, part 23 (October 9, 1992), p. 34802.
- c. "Reappointment of Lt. Gen. Leonard P. Wishart, III (Ret.) as Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services of the House," *Congressional Record*, vol. 139, part 1 (January 5, 1993), p. 104.
- d. A specific appointment date is not available. Randall Medlock was appointed on a temporary basis following the resignation of Leonard Wishart effective January 21, 1994 ("Communication from Director of Non-Legislative and Financial Services, House of Representatives," *Congressional Record*, vol. 140, part 1 (February 3, 1994), p. 1047). For additional information, see *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 103rd Congress, 2nd Session, vol. L (Washington: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1994), p. 13; and Timothy J. Burger, "Wishart

- Quits Abruptly As First Director ‘He Was Fighting a War He Could Never Win,’” *Roll Call*, January 13, 1994.
- e. “Election of Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chaplain,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 141, part 1 (January 4, 1995), p. 447.
 - f. Appointed November 22, 1996. U.S. Congress, Clerk of the House of Representatives, “Chief Administrative Officers of the House,” http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/cao.html#ftnt5. See also “Congressional (Speaker) Press Release,” *Roll Call*, November 25, 2006, p. 16.
 - g. Rep. Newt Gingrich, “Appointment of Temporary Chief Administrative Officer of House of Representatives,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 143, part 1 (January 9, 1997), p. 279.
 - h. Elected by H.Res. 207 on July 31, 1997. “Election of Chief Administrative Officer,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 143, part 12 (July 31, 1997), p. 17021.
 - i. “Election of Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chaplain,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 145, part 1 (January 6, 1999), p. 46.
 - j. “Election of Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chaplain,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 147, part 1 (January 3, 2001), p. 24.
 - k. “Election of Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chaplain,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 149, part 1 (January 7, 2003), pp. 6-7.
 - l. “Election of Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chaplain,” *Congressional Record*, vol. 151, part 1 (January 4, 2005), pp. 41-42.
 - m. Resigned effective February 14, 2007. “Resignation of Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives,” *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 153 (February 6, 2007), p. H1230.
 - n. Elected by H.Res. 129 on February 6, 2007. “Electing Officers of the House of Representatives,” *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 153 (February 6, 2007), p. H1230.
 - o. Mr. Beard resigned as CAO on July 1, 2010, effective July 18, 2010. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, “Resignation of Chief Administrative Officer,” *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 156 (July 15, 2010), p. H5656.
 - p. Mr. Strodel was appointed on July 15, 2010, for a term effective July 18. Rep. Nancy Pelosi, “Appointment of Temporary Chief Administrative Officer,” *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 156 (July 15, 2010), p. H5656.
 - q. “Election of Clerk of the House, Sergeant at Arms, Chief Administrative Officer and Chaplain,” *Congressional Record*, daily edition, vol. 157 (January 5, 2011), pp. H6-H7.

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